

Appl. No. 10/719,962
Amdt. Dated 11/05/2004
Reply to Office Action of 8/05/2004

Remarks/Arguments

Applicant would like to thank the examiner for the thorough review of the present application. Claims 5, 10 and 15 have been amended to correct minor informalities as helpfully pointed out by the examiner. Applicant has reviewed the claims in detail and believes no further errors exist therein. Proposed drawing modifications for FIGS. 2 and 4 are included in a separate paper. Such modified drawings better illustrate the claimed flap 20 of the present invention.

The examiner has rejected independent claims 1, 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,264,314 to Johns. After reviewing the originally filed claims in more detail, applicant has amended the independent claims to better define and distinctly claim the present invention. In particular, applicant mistakenly stated, the "flap being adaptable for extending substantially vertically downwardly from said collar receiving portion....and terminating below said attaching means...". A better description is the "flap" is positionable upwardly along the collar receiving portion and terminating over the "attaching means", as reflected in applicant's amended independent claims 1, 7 and 12.

Nevertheless, applicant respectfully submits the examiner has mischaracterized the Johns reference. Applicant's independent claims 1, 7 and 12 specifically require the combination of a collar member 30, and a flap 20 integral with the top edge portion 13 of collar receiving portion 12 to cover the attaching means 40 (see amended figures and claims referenced above). Neither Johns nor any other prior art of record discloses or provides any suggestion, teaching or motivation to include the aforementioned flap and collar member combination, as claimed by the applicant (see FIG. 2 of Johns).


In view of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of the original claims should be considered as no longer tenable with respect to the currently amended independent claims 1, 7 and 12. All pending dependent claims necessarily include the recitations of their independent claims and therefore are also in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Should the examiner consider necessary or desirable to make formal changes

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anywhere in the specification, claims and/or drawings, then it is respectfully asked that such changes be made by examiner's Amendment, if the examiner feels this would facilitate passage of the case to issuance. Alternatively, should the examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,
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